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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TAIPEI 000184

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STATE PASS USTR/DAVID KATZ AND JARED RAGLAND
USDA FAS FOR OSTA - Mike Henney and Melissa Clarkson
USDA FAS FOR OCRA - Lori Smith
USDOC FOR 4430/ITA/MAC

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TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [KPAO](#) [OEXC](#) [OIIP](#) [SENV](#) [TBIO](#) [TW](#)
SUBJECT: Taiwan Biotech: 2008 Outreach Proposals

Ref: 07 STATE 160639

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. See paragraphs 4, 11, and 18.

Background

[1](#)2. (SBU) Taiwan is the U.S.'s sixth largest agricultural export market. In 2006, the United States exported more than USD 2.5 billion of agricultural, fish and forest products to Taiwan, USD one billion of which was biotech products. Taiwan has committed significant resources to domestic biotechnology research, but none of Taiwan's many locally-developed products have been approved for commercial development, due mostly to environmental concerns about biotechnology. In addition, international firms seeking approval for biotech products in Taiwan often face requests for information that are not pertinent to food safety, and Taiwan's slow biotech approval process has sometimes threatened to disrupt trade.

[1](#)3. (SBU) AIT/T believes that Taiwan has the potential to become one of the world's early adopters, commercializers, and exporters of biotechnology. A biotech-friendly Taiwan would both increase overall U.S. exports of biotech products to Taiwan, and reduce the likelihood of costly disruptions to Taiwan's imports of U.S. biotech products. To help achieve this goal, post would like to use USD 37,465 of funds available under the EB Biotechnology Initiative to raise awareness of the benefits and safety of biotech products among Taiwan's key policy-makers, scientists, agricultural producers, and general public.

Part One: U.S. Speaker Program (Workshop)

[1](#)4. (U) Proposal: Co-sponsor with a local NGO a one-day seminar or workshop on the future importance of biotech to Taiwan's economy, in conjunction with the Executive Yuan (EY) Council for Economic Planning and Development (CEPD) or similar pro-growth economic organization. Focus would be on the safety of biotech products, Taiwan's strong indigenous biotech industry, and the possible economic benefits of biotech for high-quality economic growth in Taiwan.

[1](#)5. (U) Cost: USD 21,550. Including:

--No cost for the venue, which we could hold at the AIT/PAS American Culture Center (ACC).

--No extra cost for lunch and refreshments, which will be covered by

the co-sponsor.

--USD 1000 to defray the cost of travel for researchers from outside greater Taipei. This is essential to ensuring island-wide participation, especially from the more agriculture-dependent south.

--USD 1250 for one day of simultaneous interpretation services.

--USD 1300 for publications and small commemorative gift, such as pens or mugs, which usually cost about USD five per set. Such gifts are customary in Taiwan, and not giving out some small commemorative item to the attendees would be unusual.

--USD 18,000 for two speakers on U.S. and world biotech issues, including about USD 14,000 for two business-class airline tickets, USD 300 for materials allowance for two speakers, USD 1600 for USD 200 honorarium for each speaker per day for four days (two days of travel, one day of speaking, and one rest day), and \$1758 for three days of lodging and MI&E for two people. Please note that AIT's speaker budget is extremely limited in FY 2008, and it won't be possible to fund such speakers without using these special biotech funds.

¶6. (SBU) The target audiences: 20-30 agricultural researchers at key universities and institutes; 10-20 key policymakers at the Department of Health and the Council of Agriculture, 10 participants from regional agriculture institutions.

¶7. (SBU) Specific agbiotech issues to be addressed: Proven safety and efficiency of biotech products, both from the United States and (potentially) Taiwan; positive outlook for future growth of Taiwan's indigenous biotech research industry; benefits of biotech products for Taiwan's food producers; benefits of low-pesticide biotech products for Taiwan's environment and public health; benefits of agricultural biotechnology and the adoption and development of

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biotechnology in other countries; helping Taiwan researchers and regulators improve the commercialization of research.

¶8. (SBU) U.S. policy objectives: Our overall effort is focused on giving Taiwan a stake in risk-based biotechnology regulation and thereby reducing the likelihood of trade disruptions due to concerns about biotechnology. Encouraging Taiwan to commercialize some of its promising biotech research may turn Taiwan into an active supporter of biotechnology in the WTO and other fora. Taiwan's support for the G-10 may also diminish over the long term if, as is likely, the new cultivars reduce area dedicated to rice production.

¶9. (U) Proposed length of program: One-day seminar

¶10. (U) Post responsible officers and contact information: Economic Officer Matthew O'Connor (o'connorme@state.gov), FAS Officer Alan Hallman (Alan.Hallman@usda.gov), and Cultural Affairs Officer Nick Papp (pappn@state.gov)

Part Two: U.S. Speaker Program (Public Outreach)

¶11. (U) Proposal: Programming speakers from the United States--already in Taiwan on Part One of the proposal--to speak on biotech and biotech commercialization issues. Programs could include round-table discussions with academic and other experts contracted by the Taiwan authorities to draft food safety regulations for foods derived from microorganisms and/or animals created with modern transgenic techniques. The speakers would share the U.S. experience and process of regulating biotech micro-organisms and/or animals, answer questions about the safety of these products, speak with policy-makers about the commercial outlook for this kind of biotechnology, and help instill confidence in the U.S. regulatory system.

¶12. (U) Cost: USD 5900. No cost for the travel to Taiwan, since we will piggyback this on Part One of the proposal. Additional cost

for three days of lodging and MI&E for each speaker would be USD 293 * 3 = USD 879, or for two people = USD 1758, plus USD 200 honorarium for two speakers for three days of speaking and travel = USD 1200, USD 1250 per day for two days of interpretation = USD 2500, and about USD 200 per person for domestic travel expenses = USD 400)

¶13. (SBU) The target audiences: Broad audiences of agricultural researchers at key universities and institutes, food-safety regulation experts, local and mid-level government officials, agricultural associations, influential scientists, and the general public.

¶14. (SBU) Specific agbiotech issues to be addressed: Proven safety and efficiency of biotech products; positive outlook for future growth of Taiwan's indigenous biotech research industry; benefits of biotech products for Taiwan's food producers; benefits of low-pesticide biotech products for Taiwan's environment and public health; the importance of science-based safety assessment for GM crops; benefits of agricultural biotechnology and the adoption and development of biotechnology in other countries; helping Taiwan researchers and regulators improve the commercialization of research.

¶15. (SBU) U.S. policy objectives: The overall effort is focused on giving Taiwan a stake in risk-based biotechnology regulation and thereby reducing the likelihood of trade disruptions due to concerns about biotechnology. In addition, encouraging Taiwan to commercialize some of its promising biotech research may turn Taiwan into an active supporter of biotechnology in the WTO and other fora. Taiwan's support for the G-10 may also diminish over the long term if, as is likely, the new cultivars reduce area dedicated to rice production.

¶16. (U) Proposed length of program: three days of travel and events.

¶17. (U) Post responsible officers and contact information: Economic Officer Matthew O'Connor (o'connorme@state.gov), FAS Officer Alan Hallman (Alan.Hallman@usda.gov), and Cultural Affairs Officer Nick Papp (pappn@state.gov)

Part Three: U.S. Speaker Program ("Teach the Teachers")

¶18. (U) Proposal: Bring a Mandarin Chinese speaker well versed in agricultural biotechnology and instructional methods to Taiwan to

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host educational programs and speaking engagements for high-school teachers and the general public. Media workshops are also possible.

¶19. (U) Cost: USD 10,015. Including about USD 7,000 for business-class airline tickets, USD 150 for materials allowance, USD 1200 for USD 200 honorarium per day for six days (two days of travel, three days of speaking, and one rest day), \$1465 for five days of lodging and MI&E, and about USD 200 for local travel costs. Please note that AIT's speaker budget is extremely limited in FY 2008, and it won't be possible to fund such a speaker without using these special biotech funds.

¶20. (SBU) The target audiences: High-school science teachers, with a secondary audience of the general Taiwan public.

¶21. (SBU) Specific agbiotech issues to be addressed: Proven safety and efficiency of biotech products, both from the United States and (potentially) Taiwan; benefits of low-pesticide biotech products for Taiwan's environment and public health; benefits of agricultural biotechnology and the adoption and development of biotechnology in other countries.

¶22. (SBU) U.S. policy objectives: This part of our biotech outreach effort would focus on giving Taiwan's secondary-level science teachers a better understanding of the science and safety of agricultural biotechnology, thereby increasing general knowledge of biotech and reducing trade disruptions due to unfounded public concerns about biotechnology.

¶23. (U) Proposed length of program: Five days, including three days of programming plus two days of travel and one day of rest.

¶24. (U) Post responsible officers and contact information: Economic Officer Matthew O'Connor (o'connorme@state.gov), FAS Officer Alan Hallman (Alan.Hallman@usda.gov), and Cultural Affairs Officer Nick Papp (pappn@state.gov).